1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
2.	Punjab	1	4-laning between Sirhind and Punjab/ Haryana Border KM 212.2 to 252.25 of NH-1	40.00	199.500	Works commenced in Jan.1995 progress-25%	July, 1998	
3.	Orissa	5	5-laning of Cuttack-Bhubaneswar Sectioin of NH-5 (Km.0.0 to 27.8)	27.80	218.41	Works commenced in Jan. 1995 progress-13%	August 1998	(i) Shifting of water mains (ii) Removal of encroachments and cutting trees
4.	Madhya Pradesh	3	(a) construction of Indore bypass, NH-3	31.40	73.44	Pre-construction activities in progress. Tenders invited in Aug, 96.	December, 2000	Delay in implementation of (i) pre-construction activities. (ii) delay in aproval of fresh prequalification of contractors
			(b) 4-laning of Indore-Dewas Section of NH-3 (km.574.4 to 591.6)	18.20	29.53	Pre-construction activities in progress Tenders invited in Aug.96		
5.	Maharashtra	8	4-laning between Bassein Greek and Manor Km.439 to 497 (NH-8)	58.00	117.73	Pre-construction activities in progress. Tenders invited in Aug.96.	December 2000	(i) Delay in project preparation (ii) Delay in acquisition of forest land and Cutting of trees (iii) Delay in approval of fresh prequalification of contractors
6.	West-Bengal	2	4-laning between Raniganj and West Bengal/Bihar Border Km.438.6 to 474.0 of NH-2	35.40	88.27	Pre-construction activities in progress. Teuders area to be invited.	December, 2000	(i) Delay in project preparation and land acquisition (ii) Delay in finalisation R&R action plan as per World Bank guidelines
7.	Orissa	State Road	Construction of 6 damaged State Road Bridges in Ganjam District	-	32.5	Works commenced in March, 1994 Progress-65%	December, 1996	Due to unprecedented rains

Simplification of Passport Procedures

2906. SHRI SURESH KALMADI : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have simplified the procedures for the expeditious issue of passports: and

(b) if so, the salient features of the changes incorporated?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Several steps have been taken to simplify procedures with a view to issuing passports expeditiously. The major ones are : (a) upgradation of office facilities including computerisation leading to faster screening and processing of applications;

(b) simplification of passport and miscellaneous services forms: (c) issue of passports without any further wait for clearance in cases where police verification reports are not received within the prescribed time limit of four weeks; (d) thorough scrutiny of application at the acceptance stage itself to check their completeness and correctness in all respects: (e) augmentation of staff strength to reduce and clear pendencies; (f) provision to issue passports in cases of emergency/urgency on out of turn basis on the strength of Verification Certificate issued by an authorised official; and (g) expansion of the list of officials authorised to sign verification certificates.

In Addition, certain further efforts to streamline the issue of passports are being taken such as setting up Passport Advisory Committees, opening new offices and collection centres and increasing the size and validity period of passports.

National Commission of Women

2907. DR. C. SILVERA : Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to adopt a policy for empowerment of women in near future;

(b) if so, the details thereof with objectives;

(c) whether the National Commission of Women had submitted some demands for reservation of seats in teaching profession and in decision-making bodies of the country;

(d) whether the proposed policy will cover these demands; and

(e) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI S.R. BOMMAI) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A copy of the draft National Policy for the Empowerment of Women is attached as statement.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) and (e). Paras 6 and 7 of the Draft Policy provide for taking measures and actions for empowering women and for their full participation in decision making.

STATEMENT

Government of India Ministry of Human Resource Development, Department of Women and Child Development

National Policy for the Empowerment of Women 1996

(Draft)

Introduction

The principle of gender equality is enshrined in the Indian Constitution in its Preamble. Fundamental Rights, Fundamental Duties and Directive Principles.

Within the framework of a democratic polity, our laws, development policies, plans and programmes have aimed at women's advancement in different spheres. From the Fifth Five Year Plan (1974-78) onwards, there has been a marked shift in the approach to women's issues from welfare to development. In recent years, the empowerment of women has been recognised as the Central issue in determining the status of women. The National Commission for Women was set up by an Act of Parliament in 1990 to safeguard the rights and legal entitlements of women. The 73rd and 74th Amendments (1993) to the Constitution of India have provided for reservation of seats in the local bodies of Panchayats and municipalities for women, laying strong foundation for their participation in decision making at the local levels.

India has also ratified various international conventions and human rights instruments committing to secure equal rights for women. Key among them is the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW-1979) in 1993.

The Mexico Plan of Action (1975), the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies (1985), the Beijing Declaration as well as the platform for Action (1995), have been unreservedly endorsed by India for appropriate follow up.

The women's movement and a wide-spread network of non-Government Organisations which have strong grass-roots presence and deep insight into womens' concerns have inspired many initiatives for the empowerment of women.

However, there still exists a wide gap between the goals enunciated in the Constitution, legislation, policies, plans, programmes, and related mechanisms on the one hand and the situational reality of the status of women in India, on the other. This has been analysed extensively in the Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India. "Towards Equality", 1974, and highlighted in the National Perspective Plan for Women, 1988-2000 and the Shramshakti Report, 1988.

Gender disparity manifest itself in various forms. the most obvious being the trend of continuously declining female ratio in the population in the last few decades. Social stereotyping and violence at the domestic and societal levels are some of the other manifestations. Discrimination against girl children adolescent girls and women still persists.

Consequently, the access of women - majority of whom are in the rural areas and in the informal, unorganised sector.. to education, health and productive resources, among others, is inadequate. Therefore, they remain largely marginalised, poor and socially excluded.

In this background, having taken stock of national and international developments and after a series of